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CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL IN EUROPE: WESTERN OPENING POSITIONS

By John Toogood

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PREFACE

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CONDENSÉ

Les membres de l'Organisation du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord (OTAN) vont bientôt entreprendre de nouvelles négociations sur la limitation des forces conventionnelles en Europe, d'une part pour réduire ces dernières et d'autre part pour renforcer les mesures propres à accroître la confiance et la sécurité (MPAC). L'Alliance visera, tout d'abord, à obtenir des membres du Pacte de Varsovie qu'ils réduisent leurs principaux arsenaux dans les cas où il existe un déséquilibre évident, tout en maintenant ses propres ressources militaires en Europe à des niveaux suffisants pour garantir la stabilité, la dissuasion et sa défense; en deuxième lieu, l'OTAN cherchera à donner plus d'ampleur au régime des MPAC et, troisièmement, à faire en sorte que l'opinion publique occidentale continue à appuyer les politiques des gouvernements de l'Ouest en matière de défense et de limitation des armements.

A l'ouverture des pourparlers, les positions des membres de l'OTAN revêtiront une importance capitale. L'Occident pourrait facilement se retrouver sur la défensive et il risquera de perdre l'appui de l'opinion publique ainsi que des occasions de faire avancer son point de vue s'il ne sait pas exploiter avantageusement les chances d'améliorer sensiblement le régime des MPAC. Dans les négociations sur la réduction des forces, l'Ouest pourrait manquer des occasions et se voir délaisser par l'opinion publique s'il déposait des propositions par trop irréalistes, ou si les deux camps s'enlisaient dans des différends au sujet des effectifs actuels.

Lorsqu'il s'agira d'évaluer les options, les autorités de l'OTAN devront se rappeler que ce seront les limites que l'on imposera pour toute la durée des accords qui importeront le

plus; les points de départ et même l'ampleur des réductions seront secondaires.

Il existe de bonnes raisons de ne pas formuler des propositions globales au début des pourparlers sur les réductions. L'Occident devra préciser quelles réductions il voudra voir s'opérer chez les forces de l'Est, et s'engager à étudier les exigences du Pacte de Varsovie en retour. Parallèlement, l'Ouest devra décrire certaines de ses préoccupations en matière de sécurité, compte tenu surtout du fossé géographique séparant l'Amérique du Nord de l'Europe. Dans cet ordre d'idées, les négociateurs devront se montrer disposés à entreposer en Europe du matériel non transportable par air, à des conditions à définir d'un commun accord, et à envisager de retirer d'Europe les troupes et le matériel aérotransportables. Il faudra aussi aborder d'autres questions, y compris les exceptions à accepter pendant la durée d'un régime de limitations, les caractéristiques des zones existant en Europe, la réalisation progressive de réductions des forces des pays situés en Europe et de ceux en faisant partie, la vérification, et ainsi de suite.

Dans les négociations sur les MPAC, l'Occident pourra rapidement formuler des propositions concrètes. Moyennant une certaine ingéniosité, il pourrait présenter des mesures susceptibles d'atténuer les risques d'impasse dans les pourparlers sur la réduction des forces, tout en prenant le haut du pavé dans les négociations sur les MPAC. Les propositions pourraient porter, par exemple, sur l'examen du niveau des forces actuelles, sur la limitation des concentrations de gros équipements militaires, sur l'ampleur et la fréquence maximales des grandes manoeuvres, sur la notification des essais des gros équipements entreposés, sur la notification d'activités spéciales menées sur les flancs, et sur les doctrines militaires.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NATO members will soon enter into two new arms control negotiations on conventional forces in Europe, one aimed at reductions and the other at the further development of confidence and security building measures (CSBMs). The challenges to NATO are, first, to achieve reductions of major Warsaw Pact capabilities where there is a clear imbalance, while retaining its own in-theatre military capability at levels adequate to assure stability, deterrence and defence; second, to develop the CSBMs regime further; and, third, to maintain the support of Western public opinion for both the defence and the arms control policies of Western governments.

NATO participants' opening positions will be critically important. The West could easily find itself on the defensive and risk losing public support as well as opportunities for further progress if it does not deal constructively with possibilities for substantial advances in CSBMs. In the reduction negotiations there is a risk of lost opportunity and erosion of public support if the West tables unrealistically extreme proposals or if the two sides become bogged down in disputes about current force strengths.

When appraising options, NATO authorities must bear in mind that it is the limitations that will be imposed for the lifetime of agreements that are of paramount importance; the starting base and even the reduction quotas are secondary.

There are good reasons not to make comprehensive proposals at the outset of the reduction negotiation. The West should declare what reduced levels of Eastern forces it would like to negotiate and undertake to study Eastern demands in return. At the same time the West should describe some of its security preoccupations, particularly in light of the geographic separation between North America and Europe. In

that vein, negotiators should indicate a willingness to place non air-transportable equipment in storage in Europe under conditions to be mutually agreed through negotiation and to consider withdrawal from Europe of air-transportable men and equipment. Other concerns should also be addressed including exceptions needed during a regime of limitations, zones in Europe, phasing of reductions of forces from countries outside Europe and those indigenous to the area, verification and other matters.

Concrete proposals can be made early in the CSBM negotiation. With some deft handling, measures could be introduced that might reduce the risk of stalemate in the reduction negotiations while at the same time seizing the high ground in the CSBM negotiations. Proposals could include the examination of current force strengths, limits on concentrations of major military equipments, ceilings on the size and frequency of major exercises, notification of testing of major equipment in storage, notification of special activities in flank areas, and discussions of military doctrines.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the advent of nuclear weapons in 1945 and the post war division of Europe, the central issue in East-West relations has been the military relationship -- sometimes confrontational, but sometimes taking the more benign form of a search for agreed controls and/or force reductions. The last two years or so have happily fallen into the latter category and it seems there is more to come.*

East and West set out on a new journey together commencing at Reykjavik in the fall of 1986. The path ahead is as yet unclear but the first stop along the way has already been reached: the INF reduction agreement of December 1987.

In the past, the agenda of arms control negotiations was so fragmented and the achievements so sparse that there was little real impact on the viability and coherence of NATO's basic strategies for deterrence and defence. The essence of the strategies is the demonstrated ability and political will to react quickly to Warsaw Pact military activities at any level, from limited responses by conventional forces through various escalatory steps, to all out strategic nuclear war. The key instruments involved are strategic nuclear weapons in the USA and conventional forces on the ground in Europe, plus intermediate range theatre nuclear weapons in Europe linking the two.

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* The final text of this paper was finished prior to Mr. Gorbachev's dramatic announcement of substantial unilateral reductions at the United Nations on 7 December. The paper was not revised to take this significant change into account, mainly because the focus of attention here is on initial moves and tactics in the forthcoming multilateral negotiations. This micro-perspective will not be seriously affected by the Gorbachev announcement, even though NATO leaders will doubtless have to conduct a fundamental review of their broader negotiating positions and strategies.

Deep reductions of strategic nuclear weapons are being actively pursued in negotiations in Geneva, the linking intermediate range missiles (but not aircraft) are being destroyed by mutual agreement and there is a virtually unanimous belief that the next step must be a reinvigorated search for controls and reductions in the conventional field.

Conventional force reduction negotiations -- MBFR -- have been under way since 1973 but no formal agreement has been reached and the dialogue has been sterile for many years. By way of contrast, agreements on military Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM's) have been reached under the aegis of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, or CSCE. Projected new negotiations in this area will continue the CSCE/CSBM process as it has developed in the past, but the process and agenda for negotiations that will succeed MBFR will change significantly.

This change comes at a time when NATO seems to be approaching a watershed and a need to re-evaluate fundamental strategies for other reasons. The Alliance must rely more heavily on the deterrent capability of its conventional forces as a result of important reductions in nuclear weapons and the prospect of more to come. And secondly, public opinion shows distinct signs of restlessness about the wisdom of NATO strategies as well as recurrent unhappiness about defence burdens.

There is thus understandable apprehension in government circles about the continued maintenance of effective defences and the preservation of stability in Europe, i.e., the array of military capability of a character and in strength sufficient to deter the adversary, but deployed and adjusted from time to time in such a manner as not to upset what has been a

relatively familiar and predictable state of affairs on the continent.

Equally familiar and predictable in the past was the attitude of the Soviets in arms control negotiations. Their almost pathological penchant for secrecy made it difficult for them to accept Western negotiating proposals, particularly in the area of information exchanges because much information routinely accessible in the open societies of the West was closely protected in the East. Core questions about the nature of actual reductions of conventional forces and ground rules for limitations that would come into being after reductions took place, were only superficially discussed as the sides wrangled over preliminary issues of disclosure in various forms. In a sense the West had a free ride because the moral high ground of demonstrated seriousness of intent was virtually uncontested as a result of Eastern negativism.

Gorbachev and so-called 'new thinking' have changed all that: in the new negotiations the Soviets could well demand more openness than the West wants; it is already clear that they will propose constraints on military activities which go well beyond what NATO countries feel they can prudently accept.

Nor will Eastern positions on reductions and limitations necessarily be very familiar. The old attitudes of minimal concessions and the protection of parity or even supremacy in force levels are apparently being replaced by a new Soviet concept called "reasonable sufficiency" but it is not yet clear what this may mean in practical terms around the negotiating table.

It is the purpose of this paper to explore the foregoing points in a little more depth with a view to setting out recommended options for initial NATO positions and tactics in the upcoming negotiations. The section entitled "Background" reviews past negotiations on conventional forces in Europe, highlighting developments that have significance for the new undertakings. "Mandates" discusses the mandates of what will hereafter be referred to as the CST (Conventional Stability Talks) and CCSBMDE (Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe). Under the heading "Factors for NATO Participants" the author addresses the military and political factors which NATO must take into account when developing negotiating positions. Finally, "Conclusions and Recommendations" draws conclusions from the earlier discussion in this paper and sets out recommended Western negotiating positions, both substantive and tactical, for the early stages of both new fora.

BACKGROUND

At the time of preparation of this paper in October 1988, agreements to convene the CST and CCSBMDE had not formally been reached. But, barring some unforeseeable procedural change, the two new negotiations will both take place "within the framework" -- a deliberately ambiguous phrase -- of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, or CSCE. The more important will be those seeking enhanced conventional stability through limitations on and reductions of NATO and Warsaw Pact forces, the CST. The agreed area is Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals" but special treatment can be given to zones within that overall region. Participation will be limited to the twenty-three members of the two alliances.

The second conference will seek further development of existing measures to build security and confidence, reduce the possibility of surprise attack, and enhance predictability through the further development of agreements already in place that have the same purposes. The measures concerned fall into the broad categories of information exchanges, inspections and constraints on activities. The agreed area is, again, all of Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals and in all probability there will be no sub-zones. All 35 CSCE signatories will take part, that is, the members of the two Alliances, including the United States and Canada, plus all the European neutral and non-aligned countries except Albania which refused to participate in the CSCE process from the outset.

The idea of two simultaneous but different negotiations concerning conventional forces in Europe is not new[1] and there is a well documented history of antecedents. Having both of them within the same framework is, however, a new development.

From the early 1950's onward the Soviet Union has issued various calls for the convening of some form of European security conference. These overtures were more often than not thinly disguised attempts to gain recognition for post World War II European boundaries, but by 1958 the putative subject matter had been amended to a point where five Western powers led by the USA were able to agree to meet with five members of the Soviet bloc at a "Conference of Experts for the Study of Possible Measures Which Might be Helpful in Preventing Surprise Attack." The conference opened in November and recessed without agreement after six weeks, never to reconvene. Interestingly, in light of current developments, two

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1 See "Arms Control Negotiations: Two Approaches"; J.D. Toogood, International Perspectives, July/August 1983, p.21.

central issues that arose at this conference almost precisely thirty years ago were conventional troop reductions in Central Europe and inspections.

There followed some fifteen years of diplomatic moves on both sides but, other than the Four Power Berlin Agreement in 1971, no further East-West multilateral formal negotiations on security issues took place. In 1973, however, the two conferences that are the direct antecedents of those under consideration in this paper were convened.[2]

MBFR

It is not intended here to provide a history and description of the negotiations to reduce conventional forces other than to note that the formal title for what the West calls MBFR is "Mutual Reduction of Forces and Armaments and Associated Measures in Central Europe." That title is a succinct encapsulation of what the past fifteen years of effort have been about.

What is useful for the purposes of this paper, is to review the issues that arose in the negotiation because, for better or worse, many of them will be seen again in the new forum. Some valuable lessons have been learned and some subordinate issues were resolved.

The heart of the matter was, force reductions and agreed ceilings, or limitations, on those remaining. Over the decade and a half of effort in MBFR, both sides made proposals involving greater and lesser reduction quotas. Serious

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2 See CIIPS Background Paper Number 5, dated April 1986 "Conventional Arms Control Negotiations in Europe" for a more complete description of MBFR and CSCE.

discussion of optimum sizes was severely impeded for many years by the so-called data dispute -- disagreement over the number of troops already present. In later times, though, there was tacit acceptance on both sides that what really mattered was the size of forces that would remain after reductions took place. In other words, the emphasis shifted to what was of more critical importance from a military capability point of view, that is, the force limitations that would be accepted by mutual agreement to last throughout the lifetime of an agreement. A post-reduction East-West security regime in Central Europe with accepted ceilings, rules of military behaviour and effective verification of compliance would, by any standard, be a remarkable achievement with or without reductions.

Another core issue in the negotiations was the identification of what was embraced within the phrase "forces and armaments" in the official title and what counting units should be used for each. The opening Western position envisaged the reduction of a Soviet tank army, i.e. both men and tanks, but in detailed negotiations "forces" became one subject and "armaments" another. In a low-key fashion the East continued to advocate reductions of armaments associated with reduced forces but did not seriously attempt to describe what these armaments might be. The West, even less enthusiastic, refused to discuss armament reductions or limitations of any kind until the two sides could come to a meeting of minds on troop reductions.

The two agreed that "forces" should be taken to mean manpower but the quarrel over existing strengths was never resolved. This data dispute blocked progress in the negotiations more or less across the board. Almost casually, though, the sides continued to discuss reductions of brigades and divisions as well as of numbers of persons.

The question of the area to be covered in the negotiations was particularly difficult in the preliminary talks before the formal negotiation commenced. The outcome was a zone in Central Europe in which participants had troops either stationed in, or indigenous to the countries located in the zone. For the West, this area comprised Western Germany and the three Benelux countries and for the East, Eastern Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia. It was not possible to agree on the nature of Hungary's participation and so it was left on the sidelines, its status to be resolved at a later time. In practice, of course, this meant that Hungarian territory was effectively excluded. Notable in the context of the new negotiations was the exclusion of all territory of the Soviet Union although when a proposal for the advance notification of military activities was discussed, Turkey insisted that some Soviet territory adjacent to their common border be included. This Western demand for special arrangements on the flanks can be expected to reappear in some form in the new negotiation even though it was not accepted by the East.

Another issue that was not resolved in MBFR concerned possible exceptions that would be allowed in a post-reduction limitations regime. NATO participants had three requirements to be dealt with in this regard:

a) a need to continue major fall exercises in Europe in which large numbers of troops are brought in from North America and the United Kingdom and then returned home on conclusion of the exercise;

b) a need for countries in the area -- West Germany and the Benelux, called "indigenous countries" -- to be able to continue to call up reserves to undergo annual training; and

c) a need for the United States to be able to continue to stage troops through Europe en route to other locations, particularly in the Middle East.

The East had a similar problem, although it was not categorized as such in the negotiating dialogue, this was the need to be able to implement the "Brezhnev Doctrine" whereby Soviet troops could enter any country of the Warsaw Pact as they had in the past, should it seem an ally was straying too far from orthodox paths. Once ceilings were in place none of these practices would be possible unless exceptions could be made.

The West handled its problems by simply ensuring that appropriate provisions were embodied in the texts of draft agreements it proposed. The East addressed its problem by including an article in a draft treaty to the effect that existing obligations would take precedence over any new MBFR agreement. Since the Brezhnev doctrine can be implemented within the existing network of bilateral agreements among Warsaw Pact members, this article would have effectively allowed the practice to continue. This subordination of new treaties to those already in place was not as heretical or crass as one might think at first blush because similar provisions already exist in a few other arms control agreements.[3] Because the West could see circumstances under which it too might wish to reinforce forces in Europe, the Eastern text was not seriously challenged. The East, on the other hand, did insist that the Western demands for exceptions could not be met without undermining a limitations regime. None of these issues was resolved.

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3 See, for example, Article IV of the 1972 Seabed Arms Control Treaty; Article VI of the 1973 USA-USSR Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War.

By way of contrast, the sides agreed without too much difficulty on the principle of parity in manpower as being a goal for the outcome of the limitations negotiations. It is interesting to note that this key principle was addressed seriously only in the context of manpower and only for a limitations regime. In other words, notwithstanding Eastern claims of rough equivalence already on the ground, parity of reductions was not sacrosanct in the proposals of either side. Moreover, parity was not discussed as a principle to be applied to the numbers of formations and units that would remain in the area after reductions had taken place. Thus, precedents exist to give the principle of parity circumscribed application in any new negotiations, particularly as the Soviets have publicly accepted the possibility of asymmetrical reductions of some systems. Their espousal of the new principle of "reasonable sufficiency", is also relevant in this regard. More on that later.

"Collectivity" was an important matter for the West so as not to single out the Federal German Bundeswehr for special treatment. This principle of grouping forces on either side without explicit separate national totals was accepted by the East, albeit with some subtle wrinkles, and it should be possible to carry that agreement forward into the new forum.

Verification measures were a major problem in MBFR but current Eastern behaviour makes it clear that circumstances now will be different. Earlier Eastern intransigence about on-site inspection effectively stifled detailed examinations but in the new forum, Eastern proposals may cause the West to review just how much inspection of its own forces it is prepared to accept.

There are four additional points that arose in MBFR that should be noted because they remain relevant. They are:

a) the need to treat indigenous and stationed troops differently, the former to be disbanded and the latter to be withdrawn from the area and not redeployed in such a fashion as to circumvent the letter or spirit of an agreement. MBFR negotiators had little difficulty with these items, but of course the negotiations did not mature to a point where the issues involved had to be dealt with in detail;

b) the agreement reached between the sides that "civilian analogues", for practical purposes, must be overlooked in the negotiations. This term is shorthand for the fact that on either side, civilians may be used for functions performed by military personnel on the other side and to attempt to assess the horrendous array of functions that would have to be defined in this regard is simply not possible;

c) the agreement reached between the sides as to the types of forces to be considered, i.e. not navy. This seemingly simple statement does not preclude the need to develop common ground on, for example, marines and naval infantry. Similarly, if army forces are to be reduced and air forces merely included within ceilings it becomes necessary to define which is which. Again a problem arises. For example, some countries man surface-to-air missile units with air force personnel and others with army.

This issue was not resolved in the MBFR negotiations;

d) Confidence Building Measures. These were not a great problem but it should be noted that the verification package in MBFR was not confined exclusively to that function. Two measures -- the notification of exercises and the exchange of observers -- were added that introduced unnecessary complications among more serious technical verification measures. It is to be hoped that so-called "stabilizing measures" in the new negotiations will be limited to activities needed to verify limitations and reductions and that only measures of a confidence building nature will be left to the CSBM forum.

To turn now to that parallel activity, a review of the stage setting for the next CCSBMDE can be of a different and simpler nature because here, there is a much more solid foundation to be built upon. The modest confidence building measures that were embodied in the Final Act of the CSCE in Helsinki in 1975 were developed significantly in 1986 in the Document of the Stockholm Conference.[4] The Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs) therein agreed upon stand independently as a substantial contribution to stability and to lessening the risk of a surprise attack. At the same time, though, the Stockholm agreement can pave the way, albeit in non-treaty form and with some notable lacunae, for a limitations regime in Europe.

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4 For a description of the Stockholm agreement and negotiations see CIIPS Background Paper No. 14, September 1987, "The Stockholm Agreement."

Thus Stockholm can help with some of the chores that confront the conventional stability negotiators, particularly insofar as verification is concerned. To be sure, verification of ceilings on forces in place is quite a different task from verifying the numbers of troops participating in an exercise. Similarly, providing information about a planned exercise is a more modest undertaking than the provision of information about on-going force structures and deployments. But the principle and practice of accepting inspectors and observers and informing potential adversaries about military activities, will go a very long way toward easing the negotiation of mutually acceptable verification provisions once reductions and/or limitations are agreed upon.

As for their own agenda, CCSBMDE negotiators will have tasks less complex than their CST colleagues. Tactically, though, Western representatives [5], could find themselves on the defensive if they fail to take constructive positions at the outset. Proposals to increase exchanges of information will be made and NATO participants should not have any particular difficulties with demands made on them insofar as land forces are concerned. But they have previously refused to agree to accept obligations to notify naval activities and it can safely be assumed that proposals in this area will again be tabled by the Warsaw Pact countries as well as the neutral and non-aligned.

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5 Throughout this paper phrases like "NATO participants," "Western negotiators" and others of a similar kind have been used generically for convenience. Technically, in each conference there are only national delegations.

Just as difficult, but more complex, is the issue of constraints on military activities. Constraints can take many forms. A common proposal is to limit the size of manoeuvres; a variation is to limit frequency, or areas where they may be held. Constraints can also apply to where bases may be located (not near borders) or, indeed, to almost any military activity. NATO has always resisted measures of this kind on grounds that there is an overriding need to exercise coordination of the varying national military practices, systems and capabilities of sixteen diverse allies in a comparatively small Western Europe, unimpeded by internationally agreed upon constraints.

The constraint provisions already embodied in the Stockholm document are minimal, comprising only special procedures for notifying manoeuvres whenever they will exceed 40,000 troops. That was the most that NATO participants were prepared to accept at the time of negotiation. Their refusal to go further did not attract much notice outside the negotiating arena itself but in the new negotiations the public will be likely to pay closer attention. It is also a virtual certainty that constraints will be a more central agenda issue, now that provisions for information, observation and inspection are generally in place, albeit with room for incremental improvements. The neutral and non-aligned and the Warsaw Pact will make various constraint proposals and it is not inconceivable that they could make common cause in some instances. NATO participants will be in a difficult position unless they display more flexibility than they have in the past or develop serious alternative initiatives of their own.

MANDATES

The mandates for the two new negotiations are formally still under negotiation and have not yet been made public. However the fact is that most important substance has been dealt with and that remarkable journal, the Arms Control Reporter, has laid out what seem to be quite reliable descriptions of the two texts.

In the CCSBMDE, it appears that negotiators will settle down "to build upon and expand results already achieved at the Stockholm Conference with the aim of elaborating and adopting a new set of mutually complementary confidence and security building measures designed to reduce the risk of military confrontation in Europe..."[6] The first half of this extract points toward further development of measures already in the Stockholm document but in the second part of the text the expression "new set" should at the very least open the door for the development of measures beyond a simple expansion of what already exists. There is scope here for debate among participants, but for practical negotiating purposes this wording should enable development in any direction that all of the parties can agree upon.

It is interesting to look back to the original 1973 CSCE for the development of confidence building measures. Negotiators then were required to "submit proposals" on notification of manoeuvres and the exchange of observers, but only to "study the question" of notifying military movements. The mandate for the 1988 CCSBMDE in its parallel wording merely notes that there is agreement to enter into negotiations "in order to build upon...with the aim of elaborating a new set of

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6 Arms Control Reporter, May 1988.

measures". Thus, this agreement is only to enter negotiations that have certain stated purposes with no obligation actually to develop further, as was the case back in 1973 when the whole thing began. This more cautious approach appears in a draft text tabled by the neutral and non-aligned and would appear to have been devised either to satisfy members of that group such as Switzerland who have traditionally been wary of accepting international military controls or to set out possible common ground that could be acceptable to states of the Warsaw Treaty. That organization earlier tabled a document in which the commitment to negotiate merely stated that measures to impede the possibility of surprise attack "could include [emphasis added] expansion of agreements reached in Stockholm" as well as other measures. The text submitted by the NATO participants was significantly stronger in its phrasing that the participating states "have agreed to [emphasis added] build upon and expand... and to elaborate a further set." This language, were it to have been agreed upon, would have committed the next stage of Stockholm to producing concrete results, but if the Arms Control Reporter texts are accurate it would seem that the commitment will not be as firm and unequivocal as that preferred by the West.

The draft mandate for the Conventional Stability Talks--also to be found in the same issue of the Arms Control Reporter -- is somewhat more complex in substance. The key sections are contained in a statement of objectives which are expressed as the seeking of a "stable and secure balance of conventional forces in Europe, which includes conventional armaments and equipment, at a lower level." The text goes on to state that this objective will be achieved by "reductions, limitations, removal of disparities, and redeployments." A highly ambiguous paragraph addresses the area from the Atlantic to the Urals, by stating that "the measures shall be

pursued for the whole area with provisions made for regional differentiation in a way that avoids circumvention."

Another objective is stated as being to "to reduce the capability of surprise attack and initiation of large scale offensive actions."

As to the forces and weapons themselves, there is apparently some further ambiguity concerning the eligibility of weapon systems that are dual capable, i.e. having both conventional and nuclear warheads. However, the negotiations will primarily be concerned with conventional armaments and equipment and ground forces will be the focus of attention for Eastern reductions. Nuclear weapons and chemical weapons will be excluded except insofar as dual or multi-capability may arise. But it would be a mistake to be too certain about any of these interpretations because an examination of the record of past negotiations will show that participants can and will propose almost anything, should they have a mind to do so.

In any event, if one reflects upon these extracts it is apparent that the CST negotiators have a daunting task ahead. The issue of what constitutes "a stable and secure balance" will be very much in the eye of the beholder, but practical negotiations will have to be undertaken on some of the more specific commitments, particularly those related to the reduction and limitation of forces, including armaments. The negotiation will not be allowed to stop there, though, because something must be done about disparities and the introduction of "provisions for regional differentiation." The latter phrase could of course mean virtually anything, including the situation of Turkey on the Southern flank adjacent to both the Soviet Union and the restless Middle East. It would also seem to cover the concentration of forces in Central Europe and, in

the North, the remote circumstance in the Finmark region where the Norwegian and Soviet borders meet.

As if this were not enough, negotiators are also called upon to reduce capabilities for large scale offensive actions. This phrase, in the CST mandate, as well as the call to do something about the capability for surprise attack, points directly toward the imposition of constraints in the CST as well as in the sister negotiation for confidence and security building measures among all thirty-five participants in the CSCE. Of course, treaty binding provisions constraining military activities in the CST would be of greater political and legal consequence than similar undertakings in a political declaration, as is the vehicle in CCSBMDE.

It is apparent, therefore, that the negotiating process in both fora will be complex in itself, quite apart from the complexities of the subject matters to be addressed. But as will be discussed later, this very complexity could be an advantage in overcoming some potential problems.

FACTORS FOR NATO PARTICIPANTS

In shaping their position for the new negotiations and when appraising proposals of others NATO participants will have to take into account an array of factors, some being simply objective realities, others more subtly political or even emotional in nature.

The dominant, immutable factor that has bedeviled NATO since its founding is the geographic separation between the Western European partners and their superpower ally. The effect of this (and other) factors was once illustrated to me anecdotally by a West German friend who said "If the Soviets want to add another tank to their forces in Central Europe it

takes ten hours to move one in by rail from the homeland; for the American it's ten days by sea, and for us Europeans it takes ten months to get our factories into production".

The geographic separation was the root cause of the 1979 NATO decision to deploy new classes of Intermediate range Nuclear Forces (INF) in Europe and it now accounts for apprehension in many quarters about the consequences of the agreement to get rid of the same weapons. In the opinion of some observers, NATO's strategy of flexible response has been seriously eroded, not excluding the declared policy to be the first to use nuclear weapons if necessary, and the Alliance will now have to rely on conventional forces for deterrence and defence.[7]

The validity of that view is buttressed by the now well-known Reagan/Gorbachev statement that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought"[8] containing as it does an inherent acknowledgement that crossing the threshold between conventional war and nuclear war means the abandonment of all prospects of victory. To pile woe upon worry, doubts are now being expressed about whether any level of conventional forces is adequate for deterrence, given historical incidents of the initiation of hostilities by militarily inferior states.[9] In

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7 See, for example, Paul Buteux, "The Political and Strategic Implications of the INF Treaty for NATO", University of Manitoba Occasional Paper, June 1988.

8 Initially contained in the Reagan/Gorbachev Joint Statement issued following the Geneva summit, November 1985.

9 See, for example, the article "The INF Treaty--no relief from the burden of defence," by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General John R. Galvin, in the February 1988 issue of NATO Review, page 4 and

other words, an extreme pessimist might well believe that effective deterrence is a nuclear-only concept, conventional defence must always be inadequate, and first use of nuclear weapons constitutes acceptance of defeat. The pessimist would then conclude that at the moment, NATO has no credible strategy.

But to return to the negotiating proscenium, even official USA publications acknowledge that in global manpower terms the two alliances are about equal and if there is any edge, it is in NATO's favour.[10] The consensus stops there: there are no universally accepted figures for strength in Europe, neither for manpower nor for armaments. However, there is widespread acknowledgement of an existing disparity in certain key weapons like main battle tanks, in favour of the Warsaw Pact. One therefore wonders how NATO can contemplate any negotiable proposals for mutual reductions of those systems. Indeed, at least one knowledgeable commentator has suggested that some NATO reduction proposals should be loaded as much as 12:1 in the West's favour! [11] Whatever the ratio, the fact remains that for non-air transportable equipment even parity of holdings on the ground in Europe

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comments in the IISS publication Strategic Survey 1987-1988, page 54.

10 The most recent figures in the 1987 issue of the USA Arms Control and Disarmament Agency publication "World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers" places 1984 manpower totals for NATO (with Spain) at 6.032 million and the Warsaw Pact at 5.909 million. The 1988-1989 Military Balance published by the IISS also gives the edge to NATO in both active and reserve ground force manpower.

11 See Robert D. Blackwill and James A. Thomson, "A Countdown for Conventional Arms Control," Los Angeles Times, October 25, 1987, Part V, page 1.

works against NATO in a military technical sense, because of the geographical distances from Central Europe of the two superpowers and the open ocean versus protected land routes each must traverse should theatre reinforcement be necessary.

A recent paper[12] published by the Operational Research and Analysis Establishment of the Department of National Defence in Ottawa provides the following helpful table:

Geostrategic Relationships to Europe

Air Distance to:	Inner German Border	Northern Norway	Eastern Turkey
From Eastern North America	3500 nm	3500 nm	5900 nm
From U.S.S.R. East of Urals	1825 nm	925 nm	800 nm

For heavy equipment and supplies that must move by surface modes the time difference for reinforcement of Central Europe revealed by this table is critically important. (The flanks could be reinforced by forces in Europe, they in turn being augmented from out of theatre.) For troops and lighter weaponry that can be flown from North America the 1700 nautical mile difference represents only about, say, three to four hours flying time. To be sure, the Soviets need that much less time and this could be crucial in battle but not in a pre-war period of rising tension when mobilization and reinforcement begin, given an equivalent time requirement for preparation and assembly. After that point other factors like resource availability will govern the intensity of the flow

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12 After INF - What? Deterrence, Defence and Arms Control in the Post-INF Era by George G. Bell and Associates, ORAE Extra-Mural Paper No. 49, July 1988, page 27.

from homelands. The fact remains, though, that the time/distance factor is such that NATO simply should not reduce or withdraw non-air transportable weaponry below a certain level, a level that is probably not very different from present holdings, although some in-theatre equipment could doubtless be placed in readily accessible storage.

The Allies must also cope with other immutable factors centring on the nature of the Alliance itself and public opinion in each member country. The nature of relationships within the Warsaw Pact is such that a bold, innovative Soviet leader like Gorbachev can draw his alliance partners along with him, at least in defence and arms control affairs, although some may only reluctantly acquiesce. In some respects an American leader could do the same, but not on an issue like shaping arms control proposals for the alliance's conventional forces in Europe. On this topic, a common denominator will have to be found among sixteen, sometimes fractious, partners with very different responsibilities, preoccupations and attitudes. Some of those allies will favour serious and far-reaching reductions and constraints; others will be on a damage-limitation mission, hoping for an essentially cosmetic exercise that will have no substance beyond what may be necessary to assure the public that efforts are being made.

And that is another factor. Western publics are now raising questions about the continuing need for combat-ready military preparedness. A public opinion poll conducted in Canada, the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany in the summer of 1988 reported that 96% of Germans, 90% of British and 78% of Canadians consider an attack by the Soviet Union in Western Europe to be either unlikely or very

unlikely.[13] It follows that continuing support for defence expenditures at current or higher levels will require, inter alia, credible evidence that NATO is serious about conventional arms control. Soviet minimalism has heretofore enabled the Allies to occupy the moral high ground in arms control negotiations without much difficulty. Now, though, Soviet "new thinking" and new doctrines, like a need to maintain only a "reasonable sufficiency" of forces, could well cost the Allies support for continuing defence expenditures within their own publics if the arms control minimalist mantle is transferred to the erstwhile good guys..

There may also be a subtle problem of attitudes in Western military circles. Over the years since MBFR and CSCE negotiations began in 1973, military commanders on the Eastern side have had to learn to accommodate political demands that impinged on their cherished habit of secrecy. The advance notification of activities with information about their size, schedule and nature was difficult for the Warsaw Pact to accept but Eastern military commanders have learned to subordinate military preferences to political imperatives when circumstances require.

Western military figures have had an easier time because much of the information so painfully negotiated was always available in the more open Western societies anyway. For example, when NATO holds its major exercises in the fall of each year, municipal authorities in every German village that may be affected by the movements of men and heavy equipment are given detailed information well in advance about what they can expect. Similarly, Western armies invariably stage

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13 See CIIPS communique dated 22 August 1988, "Canada-United Kingdom - Federal Republic of Germany Survey on International Security."

versions of armed forces days when the public is encouraged to visit military bases and clamber over all sorts of equipment placed on display. Thus, in negotiations so far, Western proposals, other than those for actual reductions, have really constituted not much more than codification of existing practices of openness. This free ride has had some bumps, like Soviet proposals for limits on the size of manoeuvres and notification of independent naval exercises, but Western rejections were more than offset by Eastern minimalism in other areas.

This may well not be the case any longer. The intrusive inspection provisions in the INF agreement, Soviet "new thinking", new Soviet doctrines like "reasonable sufficiency" and declared Soviet interest in other doctrines like non-provocative defence, could result in role reversals particularly within military circles. In addressing the new agendas, it is reasonable to assume that military and civilian establishments in Warsaw Pact governments have by now become much more familiar than their Western counterparts with techniques to manage this problem.

To summarize, NATO's challenges in preparing for the new negotiations are, firstly, to retain military capability and flexibility so as to assure stability, effective deterrence and adequate defence by, among other things, resisting reductions of non air transportable forces and, secondly, to develop a consensus among the sixteen Allies in support of positions in the negotiations that are respectable and serious in the eyes of Western public opinion.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is no secret that NATO participants are developing an opening CST proposal that would call for highly asymmetrical reductions of main battle tanks, heavy artillery and perhaps armoured fighting vehicles. This would be a like-for-like proposal with NATO offering reductions of its own systems by anything from zero to five per cent of current holdings in exchange for 35% or more by the Warsaw Pact, the goal being numerical parity in specified types of weapons.

One thing that can be said in favour of a proposal of this kind is that is comparatively simple. However, there are important reasons why it is unwise:

a) NATO has consistantly stressed that its conventional forces, particularly major weapons systems such as those mentioned above, are already at levels so low that a nuclear weapon first-use policy is needed to back them up. This is one reason why, throughout the preliminary talks, the Allies scrupulously insisted on language referring to stability, not reductions by both sides. Moreover, NATO's reliance on conventional weapons has increased since the erosion of the credibility of its nuclear first-use strategy, and since agreement was reached on the elimination of ground based INF. Like-for-like reductions are therefore not necessarily in the Alliance's best interests.

b) The need to demonstrate to Western public opinion that the Alliance is serious about conventional arms control will not be met by an overwhelmingly one-sided and simplistic NATO proposal. This is

especially so in the face of a new adversary who has so clearly demonstrated superior public relations skills.

c) An unserious proposal could make it almost impossible for Western negotiators to enter into either serious negotiations or constructive dialogue.

What, then, would be a better approach? The preparations for the new negotiations have now been in progress for many months and it is reasonable to assume that expert staffs in NATO capitals as well as in NATO Headquarters have at least begun, if not completed, technical studies of a highly sensitive nature on the true comparative combat capabilities of East and West in Europe. Knowledgeable experts take a myriad of factors into account such as the age of tanks, their fire power, speed, vulnerability, state of crew training, logistic support requirements and so on, to arrive at comparative tables of capabilities. This is also done with other key weapon systems. Using the outcome of such studies, technical and military staffs can establish tables of comparative strengths that would enable the maintenance of an acceptable balance of forces on either side.

When this information is handed over to political authorities it is important that the latter not be mesmerized by the principle of "parity" for reasons discussed earlier in this paper. In most quarters in the West there will probably be a visceral rejection of accepting a Warsaw Pact doctrine of "reasonable sufficiency" but in fact that is the principle that has governed Western defence expenditures in the past and it should underlie the development of Western negotiating positions now. This suggestion is made not in order to satisfy the East, but rather because it is the only sensible basis in the West's own self interest for identifying

requirements for its own forces; tank for tank and gun for gun has not been a NATO principle in the past and there is no reason why it should become one now.

The West should also be guided by the fact that in the longer term it will be the regime of limitations and ongoing confidence and security building measures that will be of continuing military importance in Europe. Reductions, no matter how small or how large, will take place for a brief moment in time, but it is the regime that will prevail afterwards that will determine the effectiveness of deterrence and defence, as well as how the military confrontation might begin to be dismantled.

The history of MBFR demonstrates the risks and consequences of falling into yet another data dispute. For that reason it would be as well for negotiators to try to avoid a search for agreement in the CST on detailed current manpower and equipment strengths in Europe. This task could, however, be approached in the CSBM negotiation by the development of existing provisions for information exchanges concerning current deployments and a review of the nature and credibility of information given by each side so far.

As to the opening CST proposal, in negotiations as complex as these, there is no good reason for attempting to develop a detailed position on every agenda item from the beginning. Indeed, there are good reasons not to do so. Nor need every proposal be comprehensive: the "total package" type of initiative can best come later. At the outset it would be quite sufficient, as well as prudent, for Western delegations in the CST to propose the limitations they would like to impose on Warsaw Pact forces and indicate a willingness to study, on their merits, any counter proposals put forward by the East -- "This is what we'd like to buy, what is

your price?" The East has already indicated that its counter demands will not be like-for-like, but rather Western reductions of aircraft and helicopters and perhaps other systems as well in exchange for Eastern tanks and guns.

To be sure, NATO must clarify its own thinking about its own forces when formulating its proposal because precedents of quality and quantity will immediately be set. For example, if drastic changes are proposed for Eastern forces then drastic proposals can be expected in return. But NATO does not need to develop quotas and rules for reductions and limitation of its own forces at the beginning: these can come later as the negotiation becomes concrete and detailed.

This does not mean, however, that the West should walk into the negotiating room with nothing further to say. That would be tactically foolish in the negotiating dynamic. A general debate extending over several weeks would probably be useful for all concerned and NATO participants should table position papers relevant to the tasks that lie ahead outlining their preoccupations. A very early paper should explain the West's negotiating concept with particular emphasis on the need to ensure the avoidance of another data deadlock. Having set out their proposals for Eastern limitations and their concept of the negotiation -- a largely political paper-- NATO delegations should then table position papers on the nature of reductions and limitations they could envisage for their own forces. The NATO position described in those papers should include:

a) Transportability of withdrawn armaments. As discussed earlier, a description of air transportable armaments that could be removed and surface only items that could not. Because the latter includes weapons central to the negotiations such as

tanks the NATO position should include provisions for in-theatre storage of such weapons with negotiated control measures and verification arrangements such as jointly manned permanent observation posts. The concept of a two-tier regime should be advanced to consist of an overall theatre limitation with sub-ceilings for operationally ready and in-storage holdings.

b) Manpower. A statement of readiness to accept negotiated troop withdrawals in the form of manpower from units but with the retention of the cadres of those units in Europe so that their full strength could be quickly restored in a time of crisis, as well as the retention in Europe of logistics personnel to maintain supply and ammunition stockpiles and heavy equipment left behind.

c) Exceptions. Provision for withdrawn troops to return to Europe for annual exercises using the heavy equipment left behind and returning light equipment with them. This statement would include an undertaking to provide an annual calendar of intended exercises with detailed advanced notification thirty days ahead, an agreed constraint on the length of exercises and a detailed description of arrangements for the return home on conclusion, together with full inspection rights for the other side to ensure that the terms and conditions were faithfully carried out;

d) Zones. NATO should ensure that no precedent is set that could exclude any eligible Soviet territory. Reduction zones within the Atlantic to the Urals area should be avoided, but to meet apprehensions of

flank countries that share borders with the Soviet Union (Norway and Turkey) a suggestion should be made to negotiate special provisions in named areas. Those provisions should include, at a minimum, special notification arrangements and constraints on the size and frequency of exercises. This position might go further by suggesting the imposition of sub-ceilings on the size and nature of forces that could be stationed in those areas.

e) Phasing. There is a great dissimilarity between the two alliances as far as stationed and indigenous forces are concerned. NATO relies heavily on its own indigenous forces, German and French in particular, even though the latter are not within the Alliance command structure, but the Alliance is not very concerned about the non-Soviet forces of the other side. Moreover, the consequences of reductions of indigenous capabilities are of a more long lasting nature than the withdrawal of stationed forces. Bearing in mind these facts, as well as the difficulties that will in any case arise in the negotiation of even a simple, all-European limitation regime, NATO should suggest that indigenous force reductions be deferred to a second phase after all those concerned negotiate and gain experience living with a first phase agreement that included reductions for stationed forces only together with limitations on all forces.

f) Verification arrangements. There is no need to put forward details at the outset, and it may be that in the new climate, this subject will not be as difficult as before. Mention should be made, though, of the need for information exchange

provisions that would enable the development of an information base for decisions about the need for on-site inspections (OSI), as well as preparation before inspecting and analysis afterward. In other words, while random OSI has a role to play in a limitations regime it is of greater importance that inspection teams be used to corroborate information already at hand, either to verify its validity or check any suspected violations.

It will take some months for the delegations to cover this ground even superficially, as well as to listen to views and proposals from the other side and react to them. At some point during this time, conversations on the margins will have enabled an appraisal of the best way to proceed further. If common ground seems to be emerging it would be as well to set the debate aside while practical negotiations of one or more aspects are pursued. If the time does not yet seem ripe, any of the foregoing subjects could be explored in greater detail or new ones introduced: views on surprise attack controls, for example.

But for the purpose of this paper, consideration concerning the first phase of the CST negotiations can be drawn to a close at this point.

In the CCSBMDE, positions can be set out in more precise terms from the outset. It is also possible for NATO negotiators to avoid the negative, minimalist role mentioned earlier, given a little imagination and careful orchestration between the two fora. As already discussed, the CCSBMDE can play a valuable role as a lightning rod to deal with issues that could block the CST. The main item here is the question of existing force strengths. NATO should identify, in a classified study, what agreement it truly requires about existing

strengths of Warsaw Pact forces in order to pursue the CST negotiations and table proposals for appropriate measures accordingly, together with desired verification arrangements. In this way, CST can continue to negotiate the military future while the present situation is dealt with elsewhere.

On constraints, the force level comparisons and surprise attack studies undertaken for the CST should enable the identification of advantageous limits on concentration of main battle tanks, heavy artillery and armoured fighting vehicles. Measures should be proposed to impose those limits. Further, NATO political authorities should insist on a thorough reappraisal of the acceptability of placing ceilings on the permitted size of the manpower involved in major manoeuvres. There has been mixed opinion in the past in military circles as to whether manoeuvres at levels above 40,000 men are really necessary for testing and training in areas such as cooperation among differing national forces, equipment trials under simulated combat conditions, testing of command and control arrangements, logistics coordination and so on. It may very well be that the Alliance can maintain training standards and all of its deterrence and defence capabilities without larger scale exercises. If this is so, theatre stability and political credibility could be enhanced by the acceptance of a manpower ceiling. In addition, existing provisions regarding the frequency of larger manoeuvres could be strengthened.

Agreed upon measures in the CST for mutual controls on stored major weapons should not be diluted by the invitation of non-signatories to participate in the regime but notification of periodic testing of those equipments could be extended to all thirty-five participants in the larger forum as could notifications of lower level activities in the Norwegian and Turkish border areas. At the outset of the next stage of the CCSBMDE, NATO delegations could table such proposals, each

couched to take effect when an East-West limitations agreement comes into force.

Finally, NATO has yet to respond to Warsaw Pact appeals for mutual discussion of military doctrines. NATO could seize an initiative here by tabling a formal proposal that such discussions take place among the thirty-five at regular intervals. NATO would have to accept that some of its doctrines like nuclear deterrence and nuclear first use would come under attack: they most certainly would, but this is already the case in other fora like the UN General Assembly and review conferences of the Non Proliferation Treaty. Moreover, those doctrines can be and are attacked anyway in a European context in the periodic CSCE review conferences.

In sum, with a little skill and imagination, delegations from NATO countries ought to be able to conduct themselves well in what will be an unusually complex negotiating environments in both the CST and the CCSBMDE. It is, admittedly, too easy in papers such as this to be glib about NATO positions that ought to be adopted, when in real life it is extraordinarily difficult for the sixteen to reach common positions on issues of arms control. It may be that NATO will enter both negotiations embracing few if any of the ideas discussed here. Should that have to be the case, these thoughts might be helpful a little later.

In the longer run, one hesitates to be naively sanguine in appraising the prospects for a successful CST, but MBFR foundered on the two core issues of the data dispute and verification. If CST can leave data to be dealt with in the CCSBMDE and build upon Stockholm for verification, then negotiators can at least focus their energies on key issues that remained beyond the reach of MBFR, like force structures, when discussing reductions and limitations. In the CCSBMDE

itself there is no apparent reason why further steps cannot be taken to advance further in the development of what is already an impressive array of measures that enhance stability in Europe.